

Infection Control Measures to Prevent and Control Transmission of Influenza In Emergency Medical Services

Measures to control the spread of influenza will be especially important during the 2004/2005 respiratory illness season due to the shortage of influenza vaccine. Normally the vaccine is the best protection against complications from influenza illness. Without the vaccine, infection control measures are crucial in protecting unvaccinated persons from serious influenza disease.

Respiratory Hygiene	Standard Precautions	Expanded Precautions	Visitor / Worker Restrictions
<p>1. Post signs to instruct all EMS staff to follow respiratory hygiene at both base and field settings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cough or sneeze into a tissue. • Discard tissue into a waste container. • Wash hands with soap and water or sanitize with alcohol gel. <p>2. Provide staff with tissues, alcohol gel, and waste containers at base and field settings.</p>	<p>Standard precautions apply to ALL residents and encompass many practices regarding the handling of blood and body fluids. The following are specific for respiratory secretions:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Wear gloves when in contact with respiratory secretions. 2. Wear a gown to protect skin or clothing if contamination with respiratory secretions is expected. 3. Wear a mask and eye protection to protect face if splashes or sprays of respiratory or oral secretions are expected. 4. Discard gloves, gowns, and face protection immediately after use at point of care. 5. Wash hands before and after resident contact, after removing gloves, after contact with respiratory secretions (even when gloves are worn), and any time hands may be contaminated. Alcohol gel may be used to sanitize hands if they are not visibly soiled. 	<p>Personnel who come within 3 feet of a patient with respiratory symptoms should wear a surgical mask.</p>	<p>EMS staff should be excluded from work for at least 5-7 days after symptoms appear.</p>